

QUERIES & ANSWERS.

HOW AMERICAN DOLLAR-MARK IS SAID TO HAVE ORIGINATED.

AS TO DEBTS INCURRED BY INFANTS.

The Virginia Law Upon the Subject—George Washington's Hatchet—Fruit-Bearing Mulberry Trees—The shadows of the Sun, &c.

To the Editor of the Dispatch: Please print in an early issue Percy Crow's poem on the surrender at Appomattox, entitled "The Ninth of April, 1865."

Tappanhook, Va. All right; let some one send us a copy.

"Bonny, Sweet Bessie," &c. To the Editor of the Dispatch:

Please publish the words of the song "Bonny, Sweet Bessie, the Maid of Dunbar," or ask some of your readers to inform me where they can be found.

Malvern, Va. E. D. G. We will print the song if some of our readers will send it to us.

Small-Pox. To the Editor of the Dispatch:

Please publish, for the benefit of your many readers, if the disease prevalent in some parts of Virginia, and alleged to be small-pox, is real small-pox.

Ringside, Va. OLD SUB. There has been a great deal of small-pox in this State, though it has been of a very mild type.

Poem Wanted. To the Editor of the Dispatch:

The Yankee raiders treated me very well but they took my only horse and dropped at my gate a beautiful poem, a stanza of which you will find below. I sent the poem to be published by a friend, who lost it and I remember only the first stanza. Please publish the entire poem in your paper. Very respectfully,

Dry Bridge, Va. INQUIRER.

"Trip lightly over sorrow, Trip lightly over wrong; It only makes grief double By dwelling on it long."

Perhaps some reader of the Dispatch may be able to furnish us a copy of the verse in question.

Albany Casket of Jewels. To the Editor of the Dispatch:

I am seeking information in regard to an incident which occurred during the civil war. In December, 1863, a casket of jewels was stolen from a house situated between Charlottesville and Staunton, Va. It contained several thousand dollars' worth of jewelry, and was advertised in some of the Richmond papers, years among others. What I would like to find is the name of the people it was stolen from. An old soldier told me about this before he died. I think I have information that may lead to the recovery of the jewels, providing I can learn the name of the people. Hoping you may furnish the desired information, I remain,

Yours truly, E. C. FREEMAN.

To Morning Herald, Groversville, Fulton county, N. Y.

The Dispatch is unable to furnish the information.

Casting Shadows. To the Editor of the Dispatch:

Will you please inform me, through your Query column, upon what days of the year, and at what hour of those days, will the sun be in position to cast a shadow due east and west, about four miles west of Richmond?

By answering the above question you will greatly oblige WEATHER-VANE.

On March 21st and September 21st each year the sun rises due east and sets due west. From the first of these dates to the last the sun is "in position to cast a shadow due east and west" every day.

The time of doing so depends upon the latitude of the place and the declination of the sun for its distance above the celestial equator. At this writing (June 21st) here, in and near Richmond, the sun casts a shadow due west at 23 minutes after 8 A. M., and due east at 32 minutes after 3 P. M. It will be about the same for several days.

The Mulberry Tree. To the Editor of the Dispatch:

Is the fruit-bearing mulberry a native of Virginia, and does its fruit improve where the tree is planted and tended as other fruit-trees are? AMATEUR.

Henrico, Va. Yes; the fruit-bearing mulberry is indigenous to Virginia, and the first settlers found great groves here. They thought the berries very good, indeed. It is rather infrequently nowadays that these trees are seen, but they are by no means extinct. There is quite a large mulberry-tree on the New reservoir grounds here. In Powhatan county we know of a little grove of them. A tree of tremendous size was seen on or near the Carter's Grove plantation, owned by Dr. Booth. How far the fruit is improved when the tree is transplanted from its native soil and subjected to cultivation we do not know; but it is not that some Dispatch reader can answer that question, and, if so, we trust he or she will do so.

Infants' Contracts for Necessaries. To the Editor of the Dispatch:

Please answer the following: Is a father responsible for a debt that a son, who is under 21, contracts, provided the son buys necessary things and has the goods charged to himself and not to his father? JOHN.

Darlington Heights, Va. We hardly think the father would be liable on such a contract. Your question, on its face, appears to be a very simple one, but after much research we hesitate to give you a categorical answer. There have been scores—possibly, hundreds—of cases on this very point, but the decisions are almost hopelessly conflicting. Professor Lile, of the University, in his carefully-prepared "Notes on First Minor" quotes many of these cases, and then draws the following conclusions, which we are compelled to condense:

1. Where the Child Lives with his Father, or is Subject to his Control: In such case, it is for the father to supply what comforts the child shall enjoy, and by whom and at what time they shall be supplied; and no stranger has a right to interfere with the parent's notions of discipline or economy. It is only where the parent has palpably omitted his duty, and to relieve the child from absolute want, that a stranger may charge the father with necessities furnished the child. Reasoning by analogy, it is probable that where the child, while travelling, suffers some accident, the parent might be held responsible for expenses incurred.

2. Where the Child Does Not Live with the Father, and Is Not Under His Control: The father is absolved from responsibility if the child, under circumstances involving disobedience, etc., leaves him. 3. Where the Child has Left Through the Fault of His Father: In

this case, if there is a palpable omission of duty on the part of the father, a stranger may supply the necessities on the credit of the parent. 4. Where the Child Leaves His Father by Mutual Agreement, Involving no Remission of Duty on the Part of the Parent: As the infant has been emancipated and is making his living away from home, the father's liability for his support ceases. There is a well-known doctrine that a child may bind his parents on the score of agency, but your question hardly involves that point. Whatever position our Supreme Court would take, we feel justified in warning all merchants that they deal with infants at their own peril, and should carefully investigate matters beforehand.

Faith Not to Cure Disease. To the Editor of the Dispatch:

It is claimed by some people that a blind person can distinguish the colors; that a table can be made to walk, and that faith can cure diseases. I deny the assertions in the following verses. Am I right or am I wrong?

It is only by sight we distinguish a color—No other way given to sister or brother. The other four senses are impotent to do it.

In the following lines I think I can show it. No color without light; without light and no sight.

Nobody can tell that color has smell, And time will be wasted by trying to taste it.

No one ever fears that color can hear. Should one try to feed it he surely would miss it.

So none without sight can distinguish a color. Unless the Almighty should inspire the fellow.

No one can make a table or stand. Walk down from an attic and follow a man.

Unless the Almighty should help in that hour, And grant to such person miraculous power.

Faith is not given to cure a disease. Abraham's not, did not say what you please. For faith Christ healed, His Apostles did not.

Some say He does now, but many deny it.

George Washington's Hatchet. To the Editor of the Dispatch:

Many years ago, when a school-boy in England, I used to see a poem beginning somewhat after the fashion of the lines quoted below. The verses have "run" in my mind for years, but since taking up my abode in America I can find no one who knows them or who can name the author. Can you enlighten me as to the matter, or print an exact copy of the poem? The opening verses (so far as I can remember) are as follows:

There was once a young Virginian, And a princely boy he was;

Yet he sprang not from a princely line, Nor was of high degree;

But the clear blood mantled from his cheek, And his eyes shone brightly;

For he never faded from his eye, And his heart was right noble;

For he never faded from his eye, And his heart was right noble;

Now his home was near a forest, Filled with lofty branching trees;

And his hand had been to try his knife, Boy fashion, upon these;

Who may think that he not seldom, too, Has sapped the brittle tree;

When his father found a hatchet And brought it for his boy.

The rest of the poem recites the destruction of the tree, and draws a moral from Washington's honest confession to his father.

"WILKES." We shall have to call on our readers to assist us in procuring this poem; or, possibly, some of Virginia's school-children can answer the question. Like "Wilkes," we recall many poems on Washington which attracted our attention when we were at school, but we could not easily trace them now.

How Dollar Sign Originated. (Correspondence of the Boston Transcript.)

Some weeks ago Dr. Marcus Baker, of this city, published in one of the magazines an account of a theory which he has to account for the origin of the familiar dollar sign. This has long been in dispute. All sorts of explanations have been given; the most common of which is, that the initials of the United States are crossed. But there have been seven or eight other theories to account for the dollar sign which are about as good. Dr. Baker, in his paper, is in the library of the Bureau of Education, came across an old book entitled, "A Compendium of Federal Arithmetic, designed for the use of schools, and especially calculated for the 'meridian of the United States,'" which was published at Lansburg, N. Y., in 1775. Its author was the Rev. Chauncey Lee, of Rutland, Vt. 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